

**Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Environmental Protection Commission**

ITEM

9

INFORMATION

TOPIC Proposed Rule - Chapter 61 – Water Quality Standards, Antidegradation Policy

The department plans to bring a Notice of Intended Action in September to amend Chapter 61: Water Quality Standards to revise the Antidegradation Policy. Antidegradation policy is one of the three components of water quality standards (i.e. designated uses, water quality criteria to protect those uses, and antidegradation policy). The purpose of the antidegradation policy is to set minimum requirements for the state to follow in order to conserve, maintain, and protect existing uses and water quality. The department is required by 40 CFR 131.12(a) to develop and adopt a statewide antidegradation policy and to identify procedures for implementing the policy.

The department is proposing a four-tiered approach and guidance document establishing procedures for implementing the antidegradation policy. The proposed antidegradation policy rule, implementation procedures, and other related items can be found at the following web address: <http://www.iowadnr.gov/water/standards/antidegradation.html>. The four-tiered approach includes:

Tier 1. Existing surface water uses and the level of water quality necessary to protect the existing uses will be maintained and protected.

Tier 2. Where the quality of the waters exceed levels necessary to support propagation of fish, shellfish, and wildlife and recreation in and on the water, that quality shall be maintained and protected unless a review of reasonable alternatives and social and economic considerations justifies the degradation. Such a review will need to be demonstrated in an alternatives analysis, which is an evaluation that must explore non-degrading and less-degrading pollution control measures.

Tier 2 ½ - Outstanding Iowa waters. Where high quality waters constitute an outstanding state resource, such as waters of exceptional recreational or ecological significance, that water quality shall be maintained and protected.

Tier 3 - Outstanding national resource waters. Where high quality waters constitute an outstanding national resource, such as waters of National and State parks and wildlife refuges and waters of exceptional recreational or ecological significance, that water quality shall be maintained and protected.

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